

that Eric currently “works” for a particular company, which has nothing to do with the government. For example, Eric could pretend to be a wealthy customer and could “hire” the company to write some kind of weird, particular software. When Eric is subsequently assigned to write such software by his supervisor, he discovers the truth.

[0128] Further, in another embodiment, Eric is completely captured by his own virtual reality generating device, such as by one of the methods previously discussed (e.g., the method described by Mr. Chase to Eric), in which case the plot need not call for virtual reality displays and/or speakers being permanently mounted in his eyes and/or ears. For example, it may be common for people to wear removable virtual reality generating devices on a regular basis, so that the viral software may be designed to cause Eric to believe that he has exited virtual reality, while in fact remaining in it (at least partially).

[0129] Another means for causing a person to believe that he has successfully exited virtual reality (and thus is sensing only actual reality) may be as follows.

[0130] In the case of a virtual reality generating device that only displays images and generates sounds, a user of the virtual reality understands that nothing “touched” in virtual reality will be felt. Thus, when Eric is working in his virtual reality office, an agent of Mr. Chase quietly enters into Eric’s home and implants a robotic device in Eric’s actual room that can extend to touch or strike Eric in various places. Then, while Eric is in his virtual reality office speaking to Mr. Chase, and Eric expresses his disbelief that Mr. Chase is real or anything more than a virus, Mr. Chase slaps Eric’s face or shakes his hand or touches Eric in some other way. Then, the robot actually touches Eric in a corresponding way, to convince Eric that Mr. Chase is real (or at least that Eric is not completely in virtual reality), because Eric believes that he cannot feel any tactile sensations in his virtual reality office. The robot may then be removed from Eric’s office; alternatively, a real person may touch Eric in the way corresponding to Mr. Chase’s touches. Such a method may also be used to enslave Eric, if the plot calls for enslaving (e.g., based on the belief that theft is involved), or to enslave others, or may be explained by Mr. Chase as the method by which the “evil” profiteering companies enslave others, and so forth. For example, the virtual reality apparition may punch other otherwise abuse the person, and the person may receive corresponding actual abuse by a robot or real person while the person is in the virtual reality environment.

[0131] Of course, as discussed, Eric may be enslaved or caused to labor based on the belief that theft is involved (e.g., a belief in a kidnapping, extortion, and so forth), but preferably is captured based on no belief that theft is involved (e.g., deceit based on false information provided in virtual reality), so that he is willing and happy to labor for a relatively long time, so long as his beliefs are maintained.

[0132] In another embodiment, in the ultimate kind of irony, Mr. Chase himself is captured or enslaved in the end. For example, when Eric (or his apparition) appear in Mr. Chase’s office near the end of the plot, Eric may offer to keep Mr. Chase’s secret in exchange for being a partner in the business. Eric tells Mr. Chase that he may remain an owner and/or partner, but that he must retire and let Eric take over the business, and Mr. Chase will no longer receive any more

profits. Eric then explains that Mr. Chase will occasionally be called back to help out when help is needed, but that Mr. Chase should just enjoy his retirement and spend his money. Mr. Chase agrees, possibly excited by the opportunity to retire and/or move onto something else, while being retained sufficiently to help maintain the business that he invented and developed. After all, many people return to a business (especially a self-made business) from retirement—not for the profit—but because of the love of the business and the belief that the business is being successfully maintained. As may be true with Mr. Chase.

[0133] Then, Eric may shut down the business by exposing the truth to the captured laborers, but retain Mr. Chase as a captured laborer who helps Eric out on various difficult projects. For example, after shutting down the business and freeing the captured laborers, Eric may again enter private business as a laborer for hire. He is able to do twice the labor, particularly very difficult and lucrative projects, because he occasionally meets Mr. Chase in his virtual reality office and tells a false story about how working on a particular project (for which Eric is being paid to perform in the free labor market) is necessary to the continued success of Labor Services. Mr. Chase happily helps out, and lives happily on his savings and on the compensation provided by Eric: the belief (which is very valuable to Mr. Chase) that Mr. Chase’s business successfully lives on. Thus Mr. Chase is captured and thus labors for a false belief. Perhaps Mr. Chase is disposed to be suspicious of the situation, but so badly wants to maintain his belief that his business is being continued, that he is willing to suspend any disbelief—in much the same manner that very devout Christians are likely to ignore evidence against the truth of Christianity. In other words, the belief is so valuable to Mr. Chase that he is willing to take the risk that he has been captured in order to maintain the belief. The movie may end at this point, with Mr. Chase blissfully ignorant and Eric enjoyed his increased success and his sweet, ironic revenge, and/or Mr. Chase may eventually discover the truth.

[0134] Alternatively or in addition, Eric may not shut down the business at all; he may continue running it, with Mr. Chase the best, most intelligent, and most productive of the captured laborers. Such an ending is not the conventional happy ending in which the world’s evils are solved; rather it is a deeper, perhaps more thought-provoking, more cynical ending, causing the audience to wonder if they are perhaps laboring for false beliefs that are caused and maintained by deceitful profiteers.

[0135] “Monetary compensation” may refer to that portion of a compensation comprising a common currency or other readily exchangeable medium of exchange, as understood by one of ordinary skill in the art, including but not limited to cash, check, credit, gold, silver, platinum, diamond, any other precious metal or gem, real estate, stocks, bonds, and any other readily exchangeable property rights.

[0136] Many variations on this plot are possible. For example, in the variation in which Eric and/or other laborers are enslaved by one or more apparitions created in their virtual reality environment, the plot may be more believable if interaction by friends or loved ones is prevented. For example, if a dictator apparition convinced Eric that his life was being threatened, then Eric may be willing to labor under slavery for a relatively short amount of time before he